

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00

PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02 NSC-05 /033 W

-----033524 031013Z /15

R 021150Z DEC 77

FM AMEMBASSY ACCRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1272

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SOPN

SUBJ: VISIT OF NYT CORRESPONDENT

1. NAIROBI-BASED NYT CORRESPONDENT JOHN DARNTON DEPARTED GHANA DEC 2 FOR BAMAKO AFTER FOUR-DAY VISIT. DARNTON SAID HE HAD RECEIVED VISA IN NAIROBI ONLY TWO DAYS AFTER APPLICATION. ALTHOUGH TRAVELING AT OWN INITIATIVE, WAS OFFERED FULL FACILITATIVE ASSISTANCE BY GHANA INFORMATION SERVICES AFTER ARRIVAL, INCLUDING OFFER OF FREE TRANSPORTATION IN ACCRA AND TO NORTH. ALTHOUGH DARNTON DECLINED ACCEPT ANY FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE, WAS IMPRESSED BY EXTREMELY ACCOMMODATING ATTITUDE OF GIS, PARTICULARLY ASSISTANT DIRECTOR K.A. BROBBEY, WHO TOLD DARNTON HE WOULD TRY ARRANGE INTERVIEW WITH CHARIMAN ON DARNTON'S NEXT VISIT.

2. DARNTON DID NOT TRAVEL OUT OF ACCRA, ALTHOUGH HE WAS VERY INTERESTED IN FOOD SHORTAGES IN THE NORTH. (FYI, HIS WIFE DID TRAVEL TO KUMASI, WHERE AN OFFICIAL OF INFORMATION SERVICES ACTED AS TOUR GUIDE. SHE MET WITH J.K. TSIBOE, EDITOR OF INDEPENDENT AND OPPOSITION KUMASI PIONEER.) DURING VISIT TO ACCRA, DARNTON MET WITH AMBASSADOR, USAID DIRECTOR, HEAD OF POLITICAL SECTION AND COUNSELOR FOR ECONOMIC/COMMERCIAL AFFAIRS FOR NON-ATTRIBUTABLE BACKGROUND BRIEFINGS. WE KNOW THAT HE ALSO HAD BRIEFINGS AT BRITISH HIGH COMMISSION. WE DO NOT
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KNOW WHICH GHANAIS HE MET. BRIEFINGS AT EMBASSY WERE WIDE-RANGING AND CANDID; DARNTON SEEMED PARTICULARLY INTERESTED IN CONCEPT OF UNION GOVERNMENT AND IN ECONOMIC PLIGHT OF COUNTRY, AND WE BELIEVE HIS STORIES WILL DWELL ON THOSE TWO SUBJECTS, AND THAT THEY WILL NOT BE LAUDATORY OF GOG PERFORMANCE.

3. COMMENT: DARNTON'S EASY ENTRANCE INTO COUNTRY AND EFFORTS OF

GOVERNMENT TO BE ACCOMMODATING ARE SECOND INSTANCE IN LAST
MONTH OF WHAT APPEARS TO BE DELIBERATE NEW PUBLIC RELATIONS
EFFORT BY GOG. WE HAVE NOT SEEN STORIES RESULTING FROM NEW
OPEN-ARMS POLICY, WHICH WE BELIEVE WILL BE UNANIMOUSLY CRITICAL
OF GOG, AND WE FIND IT DIFFICULT BELIEVE ANYONE HOPES THAT
SWEET SMILE AND HANDSHAKE WILL PRODUCE NON-CRITICAL STORIES.
WE SUSPECT THAT SOMEONE, ALMOST CERTAINLY BROBBEY, HAS
CONVINCED HIGHEST LEVELS THAT LONG-TERM EFFECTS OF HONESTY AND
OPENNESS WITH FOREIGN PRESS WILL BE ADVANTAGEOUS TO
GOVERNMENT.
SMITH

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: VISITS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 02-Dec-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977ACCRA09094
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770449-0146
Format: TEL
From: ACCRA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t197712102/aaaaditj.tel
Line Count: 73
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 39e3cefb-c188-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 08-Feb-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 108544
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: VISIT OF NYT CORRESPONDENT
TAGS: SOPN
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/39e3cefb-c188-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009